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Hymn and History in Ex 15

Observations on the Relationship between Temple Theology and Exodus Narrative in the Song of the Sea

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1. *Introduction*

The Exodus has undergone a wide reception in the poetic texts of the Hebrew Bible. The best-known example is the Song of the Sea in Ex 15. Following the narrative account in Ex 14, the song praises the divine deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. However, the divine deeds that are glorified go far beyond the literary setting and extend to the biblical period of the entry into the land. Yhwh is depicted as a warrior god who leads his people to his holy mountain, the place from where he rules as divine king. As such, the Song of the Sea has long been acknowledged as an old piece of tradition that truthfully preserved the history of Israel.¹

However, it catches one's eye that the Song contains not only a number of links to the Hexateuchal narrative, but that it is also influenced by the Canaanite myth, traces of which are frequently encountered in the Psalms. Though the various parallels both to the Hexateuchal storyline and the Book of Psalms have been widely acknowledged, scholarship has not yet undertaken a full investigation of the character of the relationship

¹ On the classification as an originally independent piece of tradition cf. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, 1973, 121–124; M. Noth, *Das 2. Buch Mose. Exodus*, ATD 5, 1984, 98, and W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2, 1999, 562–568. Recently, M. Leuchter, *Eisodus as Exodus: The Song of the Sea (Exod 15) Reconsidered*, *Bib* 92 (2011), 321–346, 329–333, suggests that an antique textual version of the Song originating from the period of the early monarchy under David and Salomon was later utilised by the scribe who incorporated it into the Exodus narrative. Though he assumes that the oral origins antedate its textualisation (cf. Leuchter, *Eisodus*, 333), he argues that the poem does not contain »any references to an actual Exodus from Egypt«, but that it »conceives of the ›Exodus‹ as a metaphorical and mythic representation of the settlement and defense of Israelite land holdings in the central highlands« (Leuchter, *Eisodus*, 344 f.).

between hymn and history in Ex 15.² This will be attempted in the following contribution. Starting point of my observations is a literary critical and redaction historical analysis of Ex 15, demonstrating that the song is not a unified composition, but rather the product of a longer literary growth. The second part of this article investigates the extent to which the literary genesis has been influenced by references to poetic and narrative texts respectively. Finally, the results will allow for some concluding remarks on the idea of history in the Song of the Sea and its importance for the reformulation of biblical history in the Old Testament poetic texts.

2. Textual Observations

2.1 Literary Critical Analysis

Strictly speaking, the poetic account of the events at the Red Sea in Ex 15,1–21 comprises two poems praising Yhwh's act, namely the Song of the Sea in vv. 1b–18 that is originally initiated by Moses alone³ and the Song of Miriam in vv. 20f. Here, the hymnic praise of the song in v. 21b (שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה סוֹס וּרְכָבוֹ רַמָּה בַיָּם) has a close parallel in the introduction of the Song of the Sea v. 1b (אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה סוֹס וּרְכָבוֹ רַמָּה בַיָּם) and thus frames the combination of both texts. The short hymn glorifies Yhwh who is exceedingly glorious and has thrown horse and its rider into the sea. A prose transition in v. 19 links the two songs, while the similar prose introduction in v. 1a provides a joint to the preceding narrative account in Ex 14.

Obviously, the literary relationship between the Song of the Sea and the Song of Miriam represents the crucial literary problem. As is clearly demonstrated by the identical wording of the glorification, one of the songs should be given literary priority. Here the evidence suggests that v. 1b has to be understood as a resumption of v. 21b in order to place the Song of the Sea before the Song of Miriam. Apparently, a later author did

² However, some fruitful contributions should be mentioned here: S. Norin has already been well aware of the links with other texts from the Psalms or the Hexateuchal narrative (cf. S. Norin, *Er spaltete das Meer. Die Auszugsüberlieferung in Psalmen und Kult des Alten Israel*, CB.OT 9, 1977, 77–107); more recently the study by B. D. Russell should be mentioned (B. D. Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date and Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1–21*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 101, 2007). C. Berner, *Die Exoduserzählung. Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels*, FAT 73, 2010, 389–400, though, concentrates on the various literary links with the Exodus narrative.

³ The additional mention of the Israelites in v. 1a represents a secondary insertion, cf. in the following.

not want Moses to be inferior to Miriam and thus attributed to him a similar praise of Yhwh, relegating the Song of Miriam to second place.⁴

However, the literary unity of the Song of the Sea as a whole also has to be questioned. The main corpus of the song in vv. 1b-18 consists of two parts: The first part in vv. 1b-12 praises the supremacy of Yhwh over the enemy and draws heavily on the events at the Red Sea. Its basic literary layer can be found in vv. 1-3.6-11a* and has later been supplemented by v. 4, v. 5 and minor additions in v. 8aβ and v. 11b-12.⁵ Moreover, the mentioning of the Israelites (ובני ישראל) next to Moses in the introduction v. 1a is a secondary insertion, which explains why the plural subject disagrees with the introductory singular verbal form ישיר. The first part of the song can be divided further into a hymnic introduction vv. 1b-3 and a poetic unit in vv. 6-11a* that is mainly composed of regular bicola. While the hymnic introduction invokes the praise of Yhwh and introduces him as a mighty warrior (איש מלחמה, v. 3), the poetry further dwells on this topic and describes the supremacy of Yhwh over the foe culminating in stating his supremacy over other gods (v. 11a). The second part of the song in vv. 13-18 deals with leading the people to the sanctuary, where Yhwh will reign as king forever. The basic layer comprises v. 13 and vv. 17f., while vv. 14-16 represent a later addition.⁶

The clear bisection of the Song of the Sea raises the question as to the literary relationship between vv. 1-3.6-11a* and vv. 13.17f. There is no denying the fact that the two parts deal with different events in the history of the people, which points to a redactional unity rather than an original unity. Not only exceed vv. 13.17f. with the topic of entry into the land the exposition of v. 1b in a thematic way, but the verses also represent a surplus in view of the self-contained part vv. 6-11a*. Therefore, it

⁴ Furthermore, the differing of the introductory verbal forms points to this direction of literary dependency: While the Song of Miriam is opened with the summons שירו that fits well into the literary setting, v. 1b starts with the liturgical formula אשירה; this shows an acquisition of the literary preceding hymn by the language of prayer. Scholarship takes a nearly unanimous point of view in this question; only H. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart. Eine Theologie der Psalmen*, FRLANT 148, 1989, 99f., opts for the literary priority of the Song of the Sea. However, he maintains the primacy of the Song of Miriam in terms of a tradition historical dependency (cf. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, 100f.).

⁵ V. 4 represents a doublet to v. 1b varying the assertion that Yhwh has cast his enemies into the sea, while v. 5 anticipates the sinking of the foe from v. 8 and v. 10 (similarly Norin, *Er spaltete*, 93-95; 98-100, and J. Jeremias, *Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen*, FRLANT 141, 1987, 98). V. 8aβ and v. 11b can mainly be discarded *metri causa*, whereas v. 12 seems to be redundant, as it reports a second time the downfall of the enemies. However, the addition of v. 12 can be seen in connection with the supplementation of v. 11b, as both form a *parallelismus membrorum*.

⁶ Vv. 14-16 disrupt the connection between the arrival at the Zion in v. 13 and v. 17 that further dwells on the Zion topic (cf. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, 105-107).

can be assumed that the original Song of the Sea in vv. 1–3.6–11a* has been secondarily supplemented with vv. 13.17f.⁷

Finally, the prose joint in v. 19 has to be considered. While v. 20–21a represent the original introduction to the hymnic praise of v. 21b,⁸ v. 19 seems to be rather redundant. The verse does not introduce anything new, but rather recalls the events at the Red Sea, thus providing a literary setting for the following Song of Miriam in v. 20f. Hence it has to be seen in connection with the continuation in vv. 13.17f., as only the addition of the Zion topic necessitates the back reference in v. 19 in order to shift back Miriam's praise to the banks of the Red Sea. At last, the collective reworking that shaped the introduction in v. 1a has also left its traces in the exposition of the Song of Miriam: The masculine pronoun **לָהֶם** in v. 21a only makes sense as secondary reference to the group of Israelites from v. 1a, whose praise is answered by Miriam's song.

After having established sufficient evidence for a longer literary growth, the following account will describe the literary genesis of Ex 15,1–21 as a whole.

2.2 Tradition and Redaction

The *nucleus* of Ex 15,1–21 is the Song of Miriam in 15,20f.* (without **לָהֶם**, 15,21a) praising the might of Yhwh, who has thrown horse and rider into the sea (**סוּס וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בַּיָּם**, 15,21b). Its prose introduction in 15,20–21a* depicts the women as meeting the victorious men and initiating the glorification. However, though the divine praise fits well with the preceding victory over the Egyptian enemy, the setting as a victory procession does not correspond to the scenery at the Red Sea, where the people as a whole (men and women alike) have been the subject of rescue. Furthermore, the description of Yhwh's action lacks specific reference to the narrative account; even more so as horses (**סוּס**) are only mentioned

⁷ Scholarship is far from a *communis opinio* in this question. While Norin, Er spaltete, 100; Spieckermann, Heilsgegenwart, 107f.; Jeremias, Königtum, 98–101, and Berner, Exoduserzählung, 389–400.401.405, assume an original unity with minor additions, E. Zenger, Tradition und Interpretation in Exodus XV 1–21, in: J. A. Emerton (Hg.), Congress Volume Vienna 1980, VT.Sup 32, 1981, 452–483, 469, sees vv. 13ff. as a secondary supplementation of vv. 1bff.; cf. also R. G. Kratz, Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments. Grundwissen der Bibelkritik, 2000, 290 FN 81, who suggests an original core of the Song of the Sea in vv. 6–12. Finally, the literary unity of Ex 15 as a whole is assumed by F. M. Cross (jun.) und D. N. Freedman, The Song of Miriam, JNES 14 (1955), 237–250, 238, and M. L. Brenner, The Song of the Sea. Ex 15:1–21, BZAW 195, 1991, 30–34.

⁸ The apposition **אֶהְרֵן אָהֶרֶן** in v. 20 represents a secondary bonding that makes the Exodus a family affair.

in post-priestly additions within Ex 14 (14,9.23).⁹ Thus, Ex 14 and its poetic counterpart in Ex 15 do not share any literary links in their respective earliest literary layers. It can therefore be suggested that Ex 15,21b represents an older tradition that has been combined with the narrative account of Ex 14 at a later stage. Praising the glorification of Yhwh (**כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה**), a *Sitz im Leben* in the temple theology can be assumed.¹⁰ Such a setting, however, is by no means an indication of the antiquity of the Exodus creed. What is praised here is not the concrete action of Yhwh at the Red Sea, but his divine kingship that is manifested in his supremacy over his enemies. The horses and their riders are mere wild-card characters, whose identification has long since slipped into the obscurity of tradition.

Supplemented with its prose introduction, the cultic hymn is given the context of a victory scene and attributed to Miriam. Later on, the tradition piece Ex 15,20f.* has been used by the author of the Exodus narrative and was placed at the end of the pre-priestly account, thus giving the cultic praise a life setting at the Red Sea. In the next step, the original Song of the Sea in 15,1–3.6–11a* is set before the Song of Miriam by using the actual hymn of 15,21b as means of introduction in 15,1b. Apparently, the short hymn by Miriam provided the reason to insert a longer poetic praise at precisely this place. However, the Song of the Sea clearly outlines different priorities: First of all, the praise of Yhwh is now attributed to Moses, the leading man of the Exodus narrative, while Miriam's song becomes a mere antiphon. Moreover, the praise is transformed into a hymn of an individual (**אֲשִׁירָה**, 15,1) with elements of a thanksgiving (cf. 15,2). Thus, the poetry is shaped as a psalm that can be re-used over and over again. In view of the content of praise, Yhwh's victory over his enemies undergoes a substantial embellishment and is interpreted in terms of his supremacy over the other gods.

Considering the major continuation in 15,13.17–19 and the further additions in 15,4.5.8aβ.11b–12.14–16, the relative chronology is difficult to establish. As the trail to Mount Zion in 15,13.17–19 is presup-

⁹ The literary layering in the narrative account of the sea miracle in Ex 14,15–31 is well established. Since Nöldeke, the demarcation of the priestly parts 14,15–18*.21*.22f.26.27*.28f. is virtually certain (cf. T. Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments*, 1869, 45). The remaining text is divided into the pre-priestly account of the sea miracle and post-priestly additions.

To the convincing argument that the mention of the horses in Ex 14,9aβ (**כָּל סוּס**) and horses, chariots and riders in 14,23aβγ respectively (**כָּל סוּס פָּרַעַה רֶכֶבּוֹ**) represent post-priestly assimilations cf. Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 376f.403.

¹⁰ Cf. Noth, *ATD* 5, 97; F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel*, *WMANT* 32, 1969, 19–24; Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, 100–102; C. Levin, *Der Jahwist*, *FRLANT* 157, 1993, 343.

posed by the majority of the other additions, these verses presumably form the first supplement to the Song of the Sea. Their insertion creates a historical account that goes beyond the literary setting of the original song. While the people are still on the banks of the sea according to Ex 14,30; 15,22, the continuation already knows of their successful arrival at Mount Zion. Close in time to this insertion (or even as part of it), 15,4 was added. Like 15,19, the verse has a number of references to Ex 14, thus paving the way for an understanding that identifies the nameless foe in the Song of the Sea as the Egyptian adversary. A later author inserted 15,11b-12 in order to supplement the historical account with an allusion to the Datan/Abiram-Episode. By again referring a new to the »right hand« of Yhwh (יְמִינֶךָ, 15,12), the extermination of the rioter comes to be paralleled with the victory over the Egyptians, who have similarly been destroyed by the divine right hand (יְמִינֶךָ, 15,6). As 15,5 prepares for the parallelisation of Yhwh's punishment, the verse might also be assigned to this redactional reworking. The synonym parallelism sets the covering with floods (15,5a) next to the going down into the depths (15,5b) and thus prepares for the fate of Datan and Abiram who also go down as they are swallowed up by the earth (15,12).

The last major reworking was done by inserting 15,14–16 into the second part of the Song of the Sea. These verses complement the reaction of the nations in view of Israel's entry into the land and display various links with the preceding literary version of the song.¹¹ In this way, the nations are shaped in great similarity to the foe of the first part of the song and additionally, the march of the Israelites through the nations takes features of their march through the divided waters of the Red Sea. Similarly, the insertion of 15,8aβ uses the term »standing up in a heap« (נִצְבּוּ כְמוֹ נֶדֶם) to describe the floods when destroying the enemy. The phrase represents a fixed literary term that is normally used for the crossing of the Jordan (cf. Jos 3,13.16) so that the march through the waters of the Red Sea becomes transparent for the crossing of the Jordan. To sum up, vv. 8aβ.14–16 as a whole belong to a redaction that uses the divine praise of Ex 15 as a paradigm extending to the events of the entry into the land.

Finally, the collective interpretation in 15,1(וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)21. (לָהֶם) has to be considered. It seems safe to assume that this reworking presupposes the post-priestly ending of the Red Sea episode in Ex 14,31, where the people are said to believe in Yhwh and his servant Moses. Turning the

¹¹ For example, the verses are inserted into the context by the resumption of עַם זֶה גִּאֻלָּהּ («the people whom you redeemed», 15,13) in form of עַם זֶה קִנִּיתָ («the people whom you acquired», 15,16). Furthermore, while in 15,5 the enemies sink like a stone (כְּמוֹ אֶבֶן), in 15,16 the nations become still as a stone (יִדְמוּ כְּאֶבֶן), thus taking the place of the foe from the first part of the song.

Song of Moses into a thanksgiving song of the people following their rescue at the Red Sea, the collective reworking can be understood as a redactional answer to the creed in Ex 14,31.

The preceding account of the literary genesis has clearly demonstrated that the understanding of history and the reception of existing literary tradition plays an important part in the literary growth of the song. The following part will investigate further the different pretexts that are referred to during the process.

3. Temple Theology and Exodus Narrative

In view of the Song of Miriam, it has already been demonstrated that the hymn has a cultic *Sitz im Leben* in the temple theology. Praising Yhwh as being glorious (גִּאֲהָ גִּאֲהָ, Ex 15,21) is an integral part of this theology and strongly recalls Ps 93, in which the divine king Yhwh is characterised by being robed in glory (גִּאֲהָ לְבָשׁ, 93,1). Thus, the author who integrated the hymn into the Exodus narrative not only created a perfect ending for the events at the Red Sea, but he also glorified the victory as deed of the mighty god-king.

As far as the original Song of the Sea in Ex 15,1–3.6–11a* is concerned, the influence of two different backgrounds can be noticed. Firstly, motifs and coined issues from the Psalms are referred to, whereby the influence of Canaanite mythology clearly prevails. Secondly, the Exodus narrative and especially the account of the events at the Red Sea in Ex 13,17–14,31 had a considerable impact on the poetic praise in Ex 15. Already the introductory statement of faith in 15,2 shows the double influence, as textual linkages both to Ps 118 and Ex 14 exist. Apparently, the designation of the events at the Red Sea as »deliverance« (יְשׁוּעָה) in Ex 14,13 recalled associations to the thanksgiving Ps 118 that was subsequently quoted in Ex 15,2a (עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה = Ps 118,14) and 15,2b (אֱלֹהֵי אֲחָה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמָמְךָ. זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֲנוֹהוּ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִי וְאֲרַמְמָהוּ) (Ps 118,28).¹² However, the address of God in Ex 15,2 in terms of »God of my father« (אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי) differs from the pretext in Ps 118. Here, another background comes into play: The address can be explained as a reference to the narrative of Moses' appointment in Ex 3,6, where God introduces himself as »God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob« (אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב). This scene is further alluded to when Ex 15,3 stresses the divine name: »Yhwh is his name« (יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ). The statement reminds us of Ex 3,13, where Moses asks the question: »If I come to the Israelites and say to

¹² The use of the short form יְהוָה, which is singular in Ex 15,2, while it occurs frequently in Ps 118 (vv. 5.14.17–19), shows that the dependency runs from Ps 118 to Ex 15 and not the other way round.

them, ›The God of your ancestors has sent me to you‹, and they ask me, ›What is his name?‹ what shall I say to them?« By giving the innerbiblical answer to this question, Ex 15,3 once and for all closes the discussion about the divine name.¹³ These linkages to the beginning of the Exodus narrative demonstrate that the god who is praised in the original Song of the Sea was supposed to be identified with the god who had already introduced himself to both the Patriarchs and Moses. However, the divine image is further complemented with characteristics that describe God as divine king and mighty chaos fighter in the Psalms. As an example, Ex 15,3 might suffice, where the praise of Yhwh as »warrior« (אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה) complements the references to Ex 3 in the context. This characterisation is borrowed from Ps 24,8, according to which Yhwh's fighting strength establishes his kingship (מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה עֶזְרוּ וּגְבוּרַת יְהוָה גְּבוּרַת מִלְחָמָה).¹⁴

In the same manner, the description of Yhwh's victory over the foe in Ex 15,8–10 is clearly shaped by elements of the chaos fight. Yet a decisive change has taken place. The floods are no longer the antagonist of Yhwh as for example in Ps 93, but they are a device in conquering the enemies. The mythical cloak cannot be misunderstood, since the waters are described as »mighty waters« (מִיִּם אֲדִירִים, Ex 15,10), thus using the same adjective that usually characterises divine kingship (cf. אֲדִיר בַּמְרוֹם יְהוָה, Ps 93,4). Despite these mythical allusions, the description is also influenced by the narrative account in Ex 14. In the pre-priestly version a strong east wind (בְּרוּחַ קָדִים, 14,21a²b) serves Yhwh when pushing back the sea, while the priestly parts add the notion that Moses made the waters part (וַיִּבְקַעַו, 14,21a¹b). Evidently the meteorological event is in the background of the description of 15,8*, according to which Yhwh turns the waters up in a heap by ways of his scornful blast (בְּרוּחַ אֲפִיךָ). While the east wind was transformed into the image of the divine blast, the heaping up of the waters clearly refers to the priestly idea of dividing the waters.¹⁵ Furthermore, the quotation of the foe in 15,9, that he wants to pursue (רָדְף) them, reworks the priestly motif that the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the divided sea (רָדְף, 14,23). Finally, the notion that the waters covered (כָּסָה, 15,10) the enemies succinctly summarises the events described in 14,24–28 (כָּסָה, 14,28). The fate of the Egyptian thus becomes transparent for the fate of the nameless foe of the Song of the Sea.

The tradition historical and literary background demonstrates that the original Song of the Sea in Ex 15,1–3.6–11a* is an exegesis of the preceding Song of Miriam that had been composed for its current literary

¹³ Concerning the linkages between Ex 15 and Ex 3 cf. Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 393f.

¹⁴ The linkage between the two verses is also demonstrated by the textual witnesses that partly adjust the text in Ex 15,3 to Ps 24,8 (cf. the Samaritanus and the Syriaca).

¹⁵ Cf. Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 395.

context.¹⁶ While the Song of Miriam can only be connected to Ex 14 because of its position directly after the narrative account, the original Song of the Sea displays a number of literary links with and allusions to Ex 14 in its priestly reworked version. These connections clarify that the horses and rider thrown into the waters (סוס ורכבו רמה בים, 15,1b.21b) can only allude to the army of the Egyptians, while the explanatory statement of the cultic hymn (כינאה גאה, 15,1b.21b) is mainly referred to in those sections that borrow from the imagery found in the Psalms. As the miracle of the Red Sea is merged with elements of Canaanite mythology, it receives a mythical elevation as a mighty deed of the god-king. Speaking of the »myth«, however, it should be noted that the author of the original Song of the Sea only used mythological ideas as existent in the psalm compositions.¹⁷ That is clearly demonstrated by the various literary links. Therefore, it seems to be much more appropriate to speak of a temple theological interpretation of the Exodus narrative. This, however, has not been without consequences. When merged with the narrative tradition, the temple theological issues underwent a historical transformation: The god-king was identified with Yhwh, who has proven his kingship in acting to the benefit for his people in history; from the time of the Patriarchs until the Exodus.

This literary and theological historical development has also affected the subsequent literary genesis of Ex 15, which will be only briefly sketched in the following. As far as the subsequent expansion in 15,4.13.17–19 is concerned, the dual background again prevails. 15,4 and 15,19 serve as a frame and enforce the existing links with Ex 14 by referring to the single units of the Egyptian forces.¹⁸ The main body of the addition, however, is dominated by influence of temple theology. While the guiding statement in 15,13 (נחה) is encountered in passages of the Psalms that compare the people to a flock (cf. Ps 77,21; 78,52), it is

¹⁶ This excludes the suggestion that the original Song of the Sea represents a tradition piece (see also Brenner, *Song*, 80, and Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 393; differently Noth, *ATD* 5, 98; Propp, *AB* 2, 562–568, and Leuchter, *Eisodus*, 329–333 [see FN 1]). One argument that figures prominently in the argumentation in favour of an old tradition piece are the archaic verbal forms in a number of verses (Ex 15,5.7.8.9bis.10.12.17bis). Some exegetes argue for this as being sufficient evidence for the antiquity of the Song of the Sea (cf. Cross / Freedman, *Song*, 245, and Norin, *Er spaltete*, 82–84, referring to the study of D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry*, SBL Diss. Series 3, 1972; the phenomenon is discussed more balanced by Leuchter, *Eisodus*, 321–333). However, these distinctive features should rather be interpreted as a stylistic device (cf. W. Gesenius / E. Kautzsch, *Hebräische Grammatik*, 71995 [281909], § 91 l, C. Houtman, *Exodus*. Vol. 2: Chapters 7:14–19:25, HCOT, 1996, 244).

¹⁷ See in general R. G. Kratz, *Reste hebräischen Heidentums am Beispiel der Psalmen*, NAWG.PH, 2004, 53–62.

¹⁸ On this see Zenger, *Tradition*, 462, and Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 394.397f.

especially the idea of Yhwh dwelling on his holy mountain that belongs into the realm of the Canaanite myth and has left its traces in the Psalms (cf. Ps 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122). All three designations that are used for the sanctuary in Ex 15,17 have close parallels referring to this background. While »mountain of your own possession« (הר נחלתך) has a near parallel in the ugaritic Baal cycle (»mountain of my possession« *b qdš . b ġr . nḥlty*, KTU 1.3 III,30), the second designation »the place that you made your abode« (מכון לשבתך) has a close parallel in Ps 33,14 (מכון שבתו), where it refers to Yhwh's dwelling place in the skies. Finally, »sanctuary« (מקדש) is the designation for the holy dwelling place mainly used in the Priestly Writing and the Book of Ezekiel.¹⁹ Comparable to the Baal myth, the holy dwelling place is a prerequisite for the royal reign. Consequently, Ex 15,18 ends with the proclamation of Yhwh's ever lasting kingship (יהוה ימלך לעלם ועד); a frequently encountered topic in the kingship psalms (cf. Ps 10,16; 29,10; 93,1; 96,10; 97,1; 99,1).²⁰ Apparently, only with the arrival at the holy mountain can Yhwh's kingship adequately be proclaimed, though it is presupposed throughout the events described in Ex 15.

The remaining two insertions in Ex 15 fit this picture well. As mentioned above, 15,11b-12 refer to the Datan/Abiram-episode in Num 16.²¹ This seems safe to suggest as the combination of the terms בלע and ארץ in the Hebrew Bible only occurs in the context of punishment of the two rioting men (Num 16,32,34; cf. Dtn 11,6; Ps 106,17) and in Ex 15,12. As Datan and Abiram are swallowed up by the earth (Num 16,32), so the foe in Ex 15,12 is swallowed up. By referring to this episode, the image of the foe in Ex 15 receives a decisive expansion: Not only will Yhwh prove his supremacy over enemies from the outside, but also riots within his chosen people will be punished accordingly. Furthermore, the existing historical account in Ex 15 is supplemented with another station and the enumeration of Yhwh's deeds is labelled as »wonders« (פלא, 15,11b).

Finally, there remains the last major insertion in Ex 15,8aβ.14–16. As demonstrated above, the addition of 15,8aβ refers to the crossing of the Jordan and makes the march through the divided sea transparent for the entry into the land. Thus, the time distance between the two events is annulled and Exodus and entry merge into one event of salvation history.

¹⁹ Though the dependency on the Canaanite myth is not so dominant in the last two examples, parallels in the Ugaritic texts also exist (on this cf. Norin, Er spaltete, 89f.; Cross / Freedman, Song, 240).

²⁰ The differing use of the preformative conjugation in Ex 15,18 should not be given too much importance in view of a starting point of Yhwh's kingship (differently Jeremias, Königtum, 100f., and Spieckermann, Heilsgegenwart, 110).

²¹ Opposed to this, Noth, ATD 5, 99, and Propp, AB 2, 529f., link Ex 15,12 with the demolition of Egypt.

Comparable to this fusion, the guidance through the land in 15,14–16 also receives elements of the crossing of both the Red Sea and the Jordan (cf. the use of the verb *עבר* in 15,16). However, the foreign nations take the place of the Egyptians and while they are not destroyed, they are seized by tremor in view of Yhwh's might (15,14f.). The motif of trembling is also known from the idea of Yhwh's kingship (cf. e.g. Ps 48,5f.), though the wording in Ex 15,14–16 recalls two texts from the context of the entry into the land (Dtn 2,25; Jos 2,9.24).²² Firstly, Ex 15,14 refers to Dtn 2,25 where Yhwh announces that he will put dread and fear unto the people, when they hear report of the Israelites (*אשר ישמעון שמעך ורגוזו וחלו מפניך*). The author of Ex 15,14 re-uses the verb *שמע*, which now refers, though, to the report of Yhwh's rescue of his people at the Red Sea. It also leads to dread and fear amongst the nations (*שמעו עמים* 15,14). Similarly, Ex 15,15f. quotes from the speech of Rahab in Jos 2, who tells the Israelite scouts that her people are in fear of the Israelites (Jos 2,9.24). Again, the quotation in Ex 15,15f. interprets the reference along the line that not the people give reason to fear, but Yhwh and his mighty arm instigate the dread of the nations. To sum up, the quotations from the Hexateuchal narrative are used to emphasise the mighty action of Yhwh and continue to build up the importance of the Exodus as a paradigm for Yhwh's action in general.

4. *Hymn and History*

On the whole, the fusion of hymn and history in Ex 15,1–21 proves to be a fruitful merger of the literary traditions found in the Book of Psalms and in the Exodus narrative. Its starting point is the insertion of the Song of Miriam that gives the events at the Red Sea a cultic interpretation. Temple theology in all its aspects continues to influence the further literary growth of the poetry in Ex 15, while the references to the literary preceding context in Ex 14 are also strengthened.

Consequently, a twofold development has to be noted: On the one hand, the myth undergoes a historiographical interpretation as the Exodus narrative is interpreted with regard to the image of Yhwh as divine king and chaos fighter. On the other hand, the narrative account is attributed a deeper meaning as the alliance with the temple theology transcends the episode beyond the narrative frame and ascribes to it a paradigmatic impact. A concept of history of salvation emerges that makes the Exodus a key event in the history of Israel with its God. History does

²² The dependency clearly runs from Dtn 2,25 and Jos 2,9.24 to Ex 15 as the Song displays literary links to both texts, while the two passages are not linked with each other. Furthermore, the verses Ex 15,14–16 show a clear exegetical intention in view of Dtn 2,25 and Jos 2,9.24; cf. in the following.

not arise as the accurate replay of events long gone, but as a means of establishing the timeless relationship between God and his people.

Though the insertion of the Song of Miriam into the Exodus narrative dates back to the pre-exilic formation of the Exodus narrative, the main part of the exegetical development presupposes the Priestly Writing. This makes Ex 15 a literary product from the Persian period. This was a time when the literary shaping of the biblical history was intensified and re-used in the poetic writing. In this development, Ex 15 plays an important role in two respects. Firstly, it has left its traces in the historical psalms that clearly know the Song of the Sea and make ample use of the text. While Ps 78 and Ps 114 closely follow the outline of Ex 15 »From Exodus to the holy mountain«, Ps 105 and Ps 106 amplify the timeline by adding the epoch of the Patriarchs (Ps 105) and the time of Exile and Diaspora respectively (Ps 106). The twin psalms Ps 135 and Ps 136, however, include the creation and seem rather distant from the outline of Ex 15, though single allusions to the Exodus poetry occur. Secondly, the praise of Yhwh at the banks of the Red Sea in Ex 15 is caused by a concrete occasion, thus offering an – albeit fictional – *Sitz im Leben* for the merge of hymn and history. This points to the conclusion that Ex 15 figured as the literary birth place of the alliance of hymn and history and might have triggered the further reception of biblical history in the poetic texts.

Contrary to the long-held opinion, this contribution argues that the Song of the Sea in Ex 15 does not represent an old tradition, but is rather an example of exegetical writing in the Persian period. The different authors of Ex 15 drew on both temple theology and the Exodus narrative and merged them fruitfully. Thus, the poem became a paradigm for the combination of hymn and history that had a great impact on the further literary and theological development in the Hebrew Bible.

Contrairement à une opinion longtemps défendue, je soutiens dans cet article que le »Chant de la Mer« en Ex. 15 ne représente pas une tradition ancienne, mais est plutôt un exemple d'écrit exégétique de la période perse. Les différents auteurs d'Ex. 15 ont pris en compte tant la théologie du temple que le récit de l'Exode et les ont fusionnés. Ainsi, le poème est devenu un paradigme, par une combinaison d'hymne et d'histoire, qui a eu un grand impact sur le développement littéraire et théologique dans la Bible hébraïque.

Entgegen der Einschätzung, dass es sich beim Schilfmeerlied von Ex 15 um ein altes Traditionsstück handelt, wird in diesem Beitrag die These vertreten, dass hier ein schriftgelehrtes Produkt aus der Perserzeit vorliegt. Die verschiedenen Autoren von Ex 15 rezipierten Texte und Motive der Tempeltheologie aus den Psalmen sowie Erzählzüge der Exodusüberlieferung und reformulierten sie auf den unterschiedlichen literarischen Wachstumsstufen von Ex 15. Dies legt den Schluss nahe, dass die Einschreibung der Grundfassung des Kapitels in die Exoduserzählung die Geburtsstunde der Vereinigung von Geschichte und Poesie darstellt und Ex 15 als Nukleus der heilsgeschichtlichen Überlieferung in den poetischen Texten gelten kann.